

**The Impact of Inadequate Funding for Vital Youth Services in Illinois and
Input on *Budgeting for Results* as an Funding Approach in Illinois**

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**Public Hearing Testimony to the
Illinois Human Services Commission
Submitted by Chris Ellerman, Chief Executive Officer
September 13, 2011**

Introduction

In July 2011, the state of Illinois reduced and eliminated funding for vital services for at risk youth throughout the state. The ripple effect of this funding reduction impacts families and communities all over the state. Outreach Community Ministries (OCM) is a community-based, social service organization serving multiple communities in DuPage County. The funding reductions in FY2012 in youth services are having a negative impact in DuPage County.

Secondly, the proposal within the Illinois Department of Human Services to incorporate "Budgeting for Results" as the framework for future funding contracts is an important shift among organizations and agencies throughout the state. Establishing important principles and guidelines when establishing this framework will be vital to the future success of this approach.

Increased Needs in DuPage County

The demographics in DuPage County are changing rapidly. Along with information from the 2010 U.S. Census, several studies have shown a dramatic increase in the number of DuPage County residents living below poverty or near poverty (working poor). Between 2000 and 2010, the number of people living in poverty in DuPage County rose by 43% compared to a 7% increase in Cook County. (Brookings Institution, University of Chicago) The poverty rate within the school-age children and youth age range (ages 5-18) remains among the highest in the county.

Among at-risk youth, there is a higher percentage of minority youth demonstrating significant risk factors. The DuPage Federation on Human Service Reform conducted a "Community Needs Assessment" in 2010. One area of needs assessment was to look at three aspects of risk among youth including juvenile detentions. The DuPage County Community Needs Assessment states, "In Illinois, Black youth are over six times more likely to be detained than Whites, and Hispanic youth are 24% more likely to be detained. In DuPage, these ratios are over 11 times more likely for Black youth and over four times more likely for Hispanic youth."

Specialized Youth Services in DuPage County

United Delinquency Intervention Services (UDIS)

In July 2011, state funding for the UDIS program (United Delinquency Intervention Services) was eliminated. UDIS is an effective intervention program in treating youth at risk of further involvement in the juvenile justice system and keeping youth out of the juvenile detention system. In FY11, the UDIS program served 1925 youth from across the state. In DuPage County alone, 41 youth were provided strategic interventions through the UDIS program. Of these 41 youth, 85% remained out of any future involvement with the juvenile justice system.

With these results, the UDIS program in DuPage County saved the state of Illinois almost 3 million dollars. In FY2011, the average daily cost to house a youth in the Illinois Youth Center was \$196 per youth per day. The average cost to treat a juvenile through the UDIS program was \$3.58 per youth per day. Statewide, the UDIS program saved the state of Illinois greater than 34 million a year by keeping delinquent youth in the community with proper treatment and intervention services.

Comprehensive Community-based Youth Services

CCBYS (Comprehensive Community-based Youth Services) provides 24-hour crisis intervention services for status offenders, as well as emergency housing, counseling, and intensive case management for youth and families in very vulnerable circumstances. In FY2011, OCM served well over 100 youth and their families in crisis with 100% of these families remaining intact after our interventions.

Since these services are mandated by law, CCBYS providers have no control over their client intake and the size of the caseload. Unfortunately, CCBYS agencies across the state have seen their funding cut by 36% since FY 2009. This business model is not sustainable for nonprofit organizations and places the entire statewide system at risk in the future. It is vital that funding remain stable and sufficient for community-based agencies to fulfill the legal mandate given to us for the youth of our communities.

Communities for Youth

The Communities for Youth program (CFY) has been eliminated as of October 31, 2011. At the request of the Department of Human Services, OCM piloted, with CFY funding, a truancy intervention program in FY 2010 and FY 2011. Truancy is often the first sign of trouble that a youth experiences before entering the Juvenile Justice system. OCM's goal was to provide early intervention services to prevent any juvenile justice involvement of the youth we served. In FY2011, through the CFY program, OCM provided intensive intervention services to 19 chronic truants. We were successful. None of the youth served entered the DuPage Youth Home in DuPage for this status offense. 17 of the students actually improved school attendance. School resumed only 2 ½ weeks ago and OCM is swamped with requests. While our numbers may be small in this program, the cost savings to the state of Illinois remains high. With the cost of housing a truant in the Youth Home at easily 10 times the cost of serving the youth in this program.

All of these specialized youth services report outcomes to the state monthly. All had excellent outcomes. Each program was in excellent position to prove its worth but sadly only one survived (CCBYS.) Restoration of the UDIS program and Communities for Youth would substantially impact the future spending of youth detention across the state.

Budgeting For Results

As the Illinois Department of Human Services deliberates the design and implementation of the “Budgeting for Results” approach, OCM recommends that the following principles be considered by the Commission:

1. *Accessibility through Community-based services:* accessibility to vital services is an important principle for youth providers in Illinois. The state of Illinois has done well keeping funding and programming close to the needs of youth and families around the state by funding and supporting community-based programming. OCM believes this is an important principle to continue.
2. *Appropriate level of funding to match services/outcomes requested:* with state funding decreasing over the last few years, an important principle for community-based providers is that the state not require additional outcomes if funding decreases. Any outcomes that are important to effective programming need to be adequately funded to ensure future program success.
3. *Clinically-based outcomes:* as outcomes are being designed, it is imperative that they are compatible with clinically sound best practices. Outcomes that are based in sound clinical practice will make success impact more practical and realistic for providers.
4. *Provider representation in the design and initial evaluation:* in order to accomplish principle number 3, it will be important to include sufficient representation of the provider network at the table while Budgeting for Results is being designed and initially evaluated for adjustments and further implementation.

Conclusion

Thank you for the opportunity to present before the Commission in a public hearing format.

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